
April 1977, Number 55



*The Delius Society
Journal*

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The Delius Society

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EDITORIAL

I am grateful to the Beecham Society Newsletter for information concerning reprints of two books on Delius, which are now available from Westport Publications Ltd., 3 Henrietta Street, London WC2E 8LT. These are:

Delius as I Knew Him by Eric Fenby. ISBN 0 8371 8394 4. Price £14.25

Delius by Arthur Hutchings. ISBN 0 8371 3958 9. Price £11.25

In case these prices should prove to be beyond the pockets of any of our members, the Editor has a spare copy of the Hutchings (original edition) for £3 including postage. I also have one of Charles Reid's biography of Beecham (Readers' Union edition) at £1, inclusive of postage. I also hear from Alan Jefferson that he has the following volumes for disposal. These prices do *not* include postage:

Delius as I Knew Him by Eric Fenby (hardback) £5.

Delius by Arthur Hutchings £3.

Contemporary Music by Cecil Gray £2.50.

Ten Composers by Neville Cardus £1.

The address is: Higher Clicker Farm, Horningtops, Liskeard, Cornwall.

* * *

I understand that a new record of the music of Delius was made in January of this year by the Bournemouth Sinfonietta conducted by Norman del Mar. The pieces included are: Two Aquarelles, Intermezzo from *Fennimore and Gerda*, Intermezzo and Serenade from *Hassan*, the Irmelin Prelude, *On hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring*, *A Song before Sunrise*, *Summer Night on the River*, and *Late Swallows*. The recording was made in the Guildhall, Southampton by Chandos Productions Ltd. for RCA in association with Harveys of Bristol. No information is at present available as to date of release. Incidentally, *Forthcoming Events* lists three performances of the Delius Violin Concerto to be given by Ralph Holmes with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra during a West Country tour under the baton of the American conductor John Canarina who was featured in Journal No. 49.

* * *

Thames Publishing, that enterprising organisation which recently published Fred Tomlinson's *Warlock and Delius*, has just brought out three hitherto unpublished early Delius part-songs: *Frühlingsanbruch*, *Sonnenscheinlied* and *Durch den Wald*. The second and third of these were given their first public performances by the Linden Singers in 1974, a concert which was subsequently broadcast, and their conductor Ian Humphris has edited them for publication. Delius Trust archivist Lionel Carley has added an English translation. The price is 60p, and the songs may be obtained from 14 Barlby Road, London W10.

* * *

The Daily Telegraph reported in an article by Alan Blyth on 9th April that the next quarter of BBC broadcasting would include "a revival of Delius's rarely-heard *The Magic Fountain*." Overlooking an obviously-unchecked historical fact, members are recommended to look out for this important broadcast in *The Radio Times*.

* * *

With this issue, members will receive a poster advertising the Delius Society. I would be most grateful if they would arrange to have it displayed in some appropriate place—such as their local library. Further copies are available from the Editor.

Tormé on Delius

As mentioned in the Editorial of Delius Society Journal No. 53 the American singer and musician Mel Tormé attended the 1976 AGM of the Delius Society in London, and later entertained the Editor in his flat. The following is an edited version of the interview:

CR: You mentioned at the AGM a *David Frost Show* in which you had a confrontation with Zubin Mehta. Could you tell me some more about that?

MT: Well, I had no idea he was going to be on the show that night, but when I got there and they told me Zubin Mehta was, I am always looking for a reason to try to propogate the music of Delius. So there we were in front of everyone and, as I recall, Angie Dickinson was the third guest. I said to the maestro "I am very glad to meet you, maestro, and I am glad you are taking over the Los Angeles Philharmonic. May I please put in a plea for some more playing of the music of Frederick Delius? Because he is one classical composer" — and I suppose that was my greatest insult to this man — "who does not get his fair dues, not only in our country, but also in England." And Mehta said "Oh, he is not a *classical* composer. That's ridiculous! Cesar Franck did it better, anyway, than Delius." Well, my ears flamed and I then said to him "I can understand why *you* wouldn't want to conduct Delius, because your lovely head of hair and your pretty features — I know what your stock-in-trade is, maestro, and it takes the Beechams of this world, well-controlled, superbly" — I can't recall the word I used — "to conduct the likes of Delius. Delius is subtle and you don't deal in subtelties." Well, he jumped on me and I jumped on him, and poor Angie Dickinson sat there, and it was one of those times when even David was stunned. But I was not about to let 'Ye olde Maestro' have the last word just because he happened to be—and by the way, he's wrong. Delius certainly fits into the niche of the classical composer.

CR: I certainly don't think it's fair to say that Cesar Franck did it better.

MT: It's not only unfair, it's totally inaccurate. First of all I don't think that Cesar Franck is a proper composer to align in the same 'bag' as Delius. Fauré might be, Moeran certainly, Turina, Debussy, Grieg in a sense, and certainly Grainger. At any rate, I will say that it did make a rather 'riveting' (as David would like to say) programme. I think we all have a tendency in this world, if one has good manners (and I would like to think that I have), to back down, but the authoritarian approach to anything — I mean, when we get down to the nitty-gritty, Mehta is a very young man. If Beecham had said to me "I love Delius, of course, but do not consider him to be a classical composer", I might think twice, but where the hell does this popinjay, this new guy — you know? I think it's very dangerous to be authoritarian on rather shaky ground, because I *do* think he's a good conductor, but he really is a Johnny-come-lately, and I would reserve remarks like that for when I am rather better-seeded. I think by now Mehta is seeded, but at that point he was brand new to the Los Angeles Philharmonic. . . .

There is something that is inimical to southern California, particularly the Hollywood region, the fact that so many movie-writers, from Conrad Selinger (God rest his soul) to Alexander Courage (who was his sort of *alter ego* at MGM and a *brilliant* orchestrator), to David Rose: David (who was one of the first to put me on to Delius) once said "Everything I write I got directly from Frederick Delius". Gene Krupa, of all people, was a *mad* Delius fan, a real admirer, knew everything. We used to talk for hours about the varying moods of Delius, particularly the two elements: the English as opposed to the Germanic.

CR: You say David Rose was the one who first put you onto Delius?

MT: He and a man who sang bottom voice in my vocal group, *The Mel-Tones*, Les Baxter. He's written several minor film-scores, and had great musical taste. During the war he had all the Delius Society sets and whatever else was available at the time. One night we went to his house and played them, and I don't know whether it was he or David who actually introduced me. I'm a dedicated enthusiast in specific areas, and for me Delius is head and shoulders above any composer.

CR: Many people say they first came to Delius in adolescence.

MT: Yes, that was the case with me. I got onto Delius in 1942, when I was sixteen. I think Delius, particularly the nature works—*First Cuckoo*, *Summer Night on the River*, *In a Summer Garden*, have a strain of bitter-sweet quality that is probably more appealing to young adolescents first learning about nature and love and, if you will, sex. I don't say it's more attractive to them than older people. I do feel this—and I'm sure a lot of people are going to rise up in arms about this—the music of Delius is music that appeals to intellectuals. I think if you are of a

coarser nature—then obviously the big, crashing, resounding stuff. Somebody said at the AGM, and I heartily *don't* agree, “The great composer who is so typically English is Vaughan Williams.” Sorry, I don’t agree. I drove to Hampshire yesterday and everywhere I could just feel the great peace. The English countryside which is so appealing to Americans (and, incidentally, to the world) we judge by the green beauty of England. I don’t think anybody—Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Bax, Butterworth, Ireland, all the ones you want to name—I don’t think anyone has captured it as well as Delius. If he were alive he would probably punch me on the nose and say “I am *not* an English composer”!

CR: But he may not have realised he was, or may not have wanted to admit it.

MT: I think you’re right, Christopher.

(We were interrupted by the telephone ringing. It was Roy Plomley.

MT: I can’t talk to you now; I’m in the middle of an interview. I’ll call you back to-morrow, but I’ll tell you what the first two records will be: Delius’s *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* and Grainger’s *My Robin is to the Greenwood Gone...*)

CR: Am I keeping you too long?

MT: No, no. I’m loving this. This is my favourite interview of the whole lot. I feel that certain English composers feel compelled to write the crashing sounds, “the might of the British Empire”. There is a place for that, don’t get me wrong. *Crown Imperial* I think is absolutely brilliant; there is a great amount of it I do like, in its place. But if you were to say to me “What is typically English?”, if you had never been in England, never seen pictures of it, but I said to you “It’s a beautiful, rolling, green pastoral country, full of thatched cottages and the Cotswolds”, I would automatically put Delius on.

CR: Yes, of course. I believe you mentioned a song of yours in which you incorporate a few bars of *First Cuckoo*?

MT: Well, let me tell you how I do this. I announce the fact that I had walked in one night to a little club in Chicago, and George Shearing, who is mad about Delius—we spend hours talking about it—he surprised me by sitting there and playing, in dead silence, the first few bars of *First Cuckoo*. Then he turned it around and tied it into a lovely setting of *It might as well be Spring*, and then in the middle he played a little droplet of *Brigg Fair*, and then at the end there was a snatch of *Appalachia*. Well, at the end I went round and said “George, please, I won’t steal it from you” (because I don’t do that sort of thing) “but would you allow me...?” and he said “By all means”, so I wrote an arrangement wherein I play the first three or four bars of *Cuckoo in Spring* and then play and sing *It might as well be Spring*. Then in the

middle the orchestra comes in and at the end they stop and I play one full stanza of *Brigg Fair*. Then they come in with the last portion of *It might as well be Spring* and when I sing the last word they play the horn-calls from *Appalachia* and then a very pure triad, and I run up the piano. I must say it's got absolutely brilliant notices. I just played the Waldorf Astoria in New York, and Rex Read, who can be very difficult, called it "the most beautiful piece of music I've heard in a night-club in aeons". I do it selfishly. I just love to play it. The first night I did it, I think it was in San Francisco, I was very concerned about what the reaction might be, but it just went down so well. I had it ready to do here, but I felt the audience at *The Talk of the Town* would get restless with that long a piece, but I may do it on *The Shirley Bassey Show*, if they allow me enough time.

I must say Delius has helped me through some terribly rough spots. You must understand that there are many, many times that the turmoil of my life is such that I cannot abide frenetic music. Delius endlessly fascinates me from this standpoint: his true nature, the autocratic, disdainful, cynical person, it is so diametrically opposed to what he wrote.

CR: Yes. In *A Delius Companion* I included a very interesting piece by Cecil Gray, in which he goes into this question in some detail.

MT: Good. Now what do you think of the works written when Fenby was his amanuensis? For instance, I happen to think that *A Song of Summer* is one of the loveliest works. But it must have been horrible to have to go so slavishly and painstakingly.

CR: Yes. I find it interesting that these works go back to the style of his middle period, rather than continuing from the last works he wrote before he went blind.

MT: The concertos, you mean? Yes, they are lovely works, but they are not my favourites. They are not typically Delian. By and large his German nature was constantly at war with his what must have been a beautiful side. I don't care how autocratic and abrasive he was, there had to be a beautiful side to the man. Some people must have seen it on occasion. Certainly Percy Grainger was a great factor in keeping him happy. But it's astounding how there are absolutely two totally different facets, maybe three, to Delius. I think he *chose* to go back to the simpler, more beautiful, nature-like form when working with Fenby. Did I tell you how I met Fenby?

CR: I don't think so.

MT: When I was here in 1967, playing *The Talk of the Town* the first time, we stayed across the street at the Dominions Hotel. So, being besotted by Delius, and knowing about Fenby, one day out of the clear,

blue sky I called up the Royal Academy of Music. I spoke to a woman and said "Pardon me for troubling you, ma'am, but I'm an American in town and I wondered if you ever heard of a musician and composer called Eric Fenby?" She laughed and said "Well, I think so. He's teaching about one hundred yards from me right now!" I couldn't believe it, and said "Could you ask him to call me?" I left the number, but I thought "He'll never call me, he's never heard of me." Well, by God, he called! And I was prepared to introduce myself to him, but the first thing he said was "Is this *the* Mel Tormé, the *Mountain Greenery* boy?" Well, I tell you, that is probably the most flattering thing that's ever happened, that Eric Fenby would know who I was! We invited him to lunch, and it was just two weeks prior to his going to Grez to begin shooting Ken Russell's film. We had a four-hour lunch. It was one of the great four-hour lunches of my life, and I really regretted not seeing him the other night at the Dinner, but I had to go to work. But consequently it's been a greatly rewarding thing for me, mainly in America, to turn people on, as we say, to Delius. My current drummer, Don Osborn, had never heard Delius, and then he begged me to tell him where he could get the music, so I gave him the Beecham record with *Sleigh Ride* and *March Caprice* and Barbirolli's *Appalachia*. And the young man is obsessed. I say that exposure to Delius with anybody with half a decent musical mind will automatically make a fan out of anybody who hears it again, with any intellectual leanings at all, with any leanings toward nature.

CR: And also, I think, a very sensitive nature.

MT: Absolutely. I must say that that is probably the over-riding common denominator among everybody that I've met in the Delius Society both here and in the States. Now there is a guy in the States who loves the *German* end of it, the *strong* side. I don't particularly, quite candidly. I know that there are pieces of *A Mass of Life*, even *Sea Drift*, believe it or not, even *Paris*, that are among my lesser favourites. Which is not to say I don't like them. I *like* them, but I don't find them as musically appealing as the tone-poems, as the nature-poems.

CR: That's very interesting. It's refreshing to meet someone who does not profess to be absolutely committed to every work Delius wrote.

MT: I suppose that to be the dedicated, dyed-in-the-wool Deliusophile is to like every single note of everything he wrote, and I don't. I am intrigued by his orchestrating, by the chromatic aspect of his writing, by the fact that — I think more than anybody I have ever heard in my life, and I think it's particularly evident in three works of Delius's: in *Appalachia*, in *Brigg Fair*, and in *Cuckoo in Spring* — I've never heard a man able to take so many variations on the same theme and make so many different things out of it, including great nuance in the structure of the chords, and what I like to call "substitution

chords". I mean taking the same melody and putting an entirely different chord-structure to the same melody in each of the stanzas or phrases.

CR: And *Brigg Fair* is a very simple tune, is it not? One that might not have appealed to many composers as a subject for variations?

MT: Yes, and I believe Eric Fenby originally rather decried the *Appalachia* theme, and has now done a bit of a turnabout, and does indeed think it's a great work.

CR: Yes. I think I know what brought that about.

MT: You mean going to Solano Grove? Right. I've always wanted to go there, and when Eric Fenby was in America I spoke to him by 'phone. and did everything in my power to try to get there, but my work prevented it. Now someone mentioned the other day about *Appalachia* (I still say Appal-ay-chia!) that they feel it is typically British. I don't. I really hear America in that and particularly segments of it. The waltz: that's Colonial America to me (He sang part of it.) And then (he sang again, this time from the march) it all has a kind of revolutionary America sound to me. Very early America, much earlier than the time he wrote it.

CR: Did you know that he wrote an earlier version which included *Yankee Doodle* and *Dixie*?

MT: He didn't? Now I never heard *that*. I'd give anything to hear it. I must say I can enjoy more Delius than any other composer. I listen to the Scythian Suite by Prokofiev, Glière's 3rd Symphony — almost the prototypical Russian piece — Ibert's *Ports of Call*, that well-known piece by Satie, but other things by these composers are strange, not as great.

But with Delius we can go on and on. Delius gives me more peace than any other composer. If I have a heavy night in my performing, and it's been frenetic, and a lot of people back-stage, and I get home and I'm wound up, I always have a cassette player with me. I did something I think rather intelligent. I put together a cassette of all the nature pieces. It's got *Brigg Fair*, *First Cuckoo*, it starts in the morning and ends in the evening. You know: *Song before Sunrise*, and it goes right through to *Songs of Sunset* and *Summer Night on the River*. The only problem, I find, is that some of the nature pieces do tend to cross each other and run into each other, so I do at times have difficulty in identifying them. Except that I am a great believer in 'too much of good can only be more good', not 'too much of good is bad'.

And with that, Delius would certainly have agreed.



News from the Midlands

An evening of delusion and doubt, paradox and orthodoxy, compiled and blandly presented to an increasingly puzzled group: thus the Midlands Branch meeting held at the home of Wenda and Peter Williams on January 21st.

To help us identify 'the unknown composer', chairman Richard Kitching as quizmaster began with musical clues in three sections. The early works produced a reasonable consensus of dates around 1900 and a recognisably youthful style with Franckish undertones. Later examples overlaid this with Debussian figures and harmonies but the final episodes belied French influence and prompted comparison with Bartok in sparse bitonal patterns. Overall the impressions were of fluent piano writing of the early twentieth century and of languorous orchestrations updated from the romantic era.

The unknown was finally named at the end of the programme as Charles Griffes (1884-1919), and only the redoubtable Lyndon Jenkins was able to reach this conclusion, despite liberal help from the Chair. The musical excerpts were followed by a summary of Griffes' New England upbringing, the influence of his formidable piano teacher Miss Mary Selena Broughton, and his career as student, pianist and composer. As one of a series of studies of Delius's contemporaries, this subject was a trifle esoteric; but we are indebted to Richard for an enjoyable, amusing and informative meeting.

E. E. Rowe

In Memoriam C.W. Orr

by Christopher Palmer

One of the hardest facts of life for any young man or woman to come to terms with is the continual saying goodbye to those with whom they have established some form of rapport at two or even three generations' remove. This I feel particularly keenly in connection with C.W. Orr who died a year ago, on February 24th 1976, at the age of 82. Of his music I have written at length elsewhere, principally in my *Delius — Portrait of a Cosmopolitan*; this brief tribute is therefore cast more in the form of a portrait of the man as I knew him.

My contact with him goes back to the summer of 1969, when I was in my final term as a Cambridge undergraduate. I had already become aware of his name and of his relationship with Delius, I think

through Felix Aprahamian; but then, more or less by chance, I encountered the only two of his songs which at that time were to be found in the Pendlebury Music Library — *Tryste Noel* and *With rue my heart is laden*. Immediately I recognised in him “my sort” of composer; I felt at the time (and still do) that the poignancy of Housman’s elegy for whatever mythical lads and lasses could scarcely be transmuted into music more exquisitely; and the harmonic inflexions in the line:-

The rose-lipt girls are sleeping

In fields where roses fade

suggested to me a man who had surrendered to the influence of my idol Delius, but to absorb, not be absorbed. I looked Orr up in Grove and was delighted to find a lengthy and sympathetic appreciation by Sydney Northcote (who I was later to discover made a number of private recordings of Orr’s songs) together with a complete list of works — exclusively songs, with the exception of the *Cotswold Hill-Tune* for strings.

I learned, too, that the composer was still alive and living in his native Cotswolds, in the Gloucestershire village of Painswick which had been his home for some 40 years. I wrote to him, arranged to visit him later that year (I was going to the Three Choirs Festival which fortunately happened to be held in Gloucester that August) and that was the start of our friendship, which lasted till he died. Not the least valuable consequence to me was that it introduced me to C.W.O.’s greatest literary love and the motive force behind most of his music—A. E. Housman. Of his 35 songs 24 are Housman settings; I read Housman for the first time on the journey down to Gloucester that summer and he became firmly ensconced in my literary pantheon. So too did that lovely genius of a poet / scholar / translator Helen Waddell, to whose *Peter Abelard*, *The Wandering Scholars* and *Medieval Latin Lyrics* C.W.O. was greatly attached and whose *Requiem* (after Prudentius) and *While Summer on is stealing* he set to music in the 1950’s.

In fact to know C.W.O. was to learn as much about the literature of his choice as about the music. His mind was steeped in fine literature and in it he took a poet’s and scholar’s delight; he spent his days amid a small but hand-picked library, every volume well-loved and well-thumbed, and I have never known a household whose atmosphere was more conducive to quiet assiduous reading and the enjoyment of study. Whenever I went to stay at Cleveland’s the evening routine was always the same: supper would be over by 8.30 whereupon C.W.O., Mrs. Orr and I would retire to the little music-room at the top of the house, simply but comfortably furnished, the walls hung with framed photographs of Delius, Elgar, Warlock, Housman and other spiritual influences. There we would each continue with whatever book we happened to be reading at the time, and often whole hours would pass with scarcely a word exchanged between the three of us.



C. W. Orr in the 1930s

This fastidiousness was typical of C.W.O.; his tastes were not catholic either in literature or music, but within their discriminated confines his knowledge and love were as boundless as they were contagious. His motto could have been Delius's "treasured appreciation of a few things". He acknowledged his limitations with typical candour: "What I find somewhat embarrassing from the aesthetic point of view is that my generation consciously or unconsciously was so soaked in the German idiom of the past that even the 'moderns' of that time, Strauss, Mahler, Wolf, Elgar, were those working in and springing from the German past, and it was very much more difficult for us to realise the 'liberation' that Debussy and Ravel achieved in freeing music from this Teutonic influence which had pervaded it for so long, and which, as far as the Northern races were concerned, was so much more easily assimilated than the French idioms... I think that those of us who are not altogether attuned to Ravel and Debussy as opposed to say, Fauré or d'Indy are more appreciative of design than colour. Now, shocking as it may seem, I get more satisfaction out of Fauré's *Ballade* for piano and orchestra than I do out of any of the Debussy *Preludes*, lovely and evocative though they are, simply because the actual 'thematic' (in other words, the design) value of the Fauré gives me greater pleasure than the 'unthematic' fluid forms of the *Preludes*....you may wonder why I adore Delius's music, which has something of the fluidity of Impressionist works, but I find a kind of Nordic stiffening in the bones of his compositions....speaking for myself I am bound to say that the *Abschied* movement of *Das Lied von der Erde* is something I wouldn't give for all Debussy and Ravel put together..."

This fairly crystallises the attitude of a whole generation. On the subject of his own compositions C.W.O. could be disarmingly humble: - "I feel more and more astonished that you can spare any admiration for my, in comparison, piffling stuff after the glories of Debussy's marvellous evocations of sights and sounds on the one hand and Elgar's marvellous and full-blooded themes and equally marvellous orchestration on the other. Elgar once said that after hearing Beethoven's no. 5 he felt like a tinker contemplating the Forth Bridge; after listening to Debussy and Elgar I feel like a child doing four-part exercises over a figured bass. I should like to console myself that perhaps Housman felt this after reading Milton or Aeschylus, but with less excuse!"

However C.W.O. did feel—and rightly so—that he had penetrated the essential core of Housman's verse more understandingly than other composers whose settings had gained wider popularity. He excepted Graham Peel's *In Summertime on Bredon* (which had constituted his own introduction to Housman) and individual settings such as Bax's of *In the morning*; on the other hand he was highly critical of the approach of such men as Butterworth and Vaughan Williams: "One thing I feel very strongly is that it is quite an error to think that in setting H. to music it is necessary to adopt the quasi-folksong style as

Butterworth and V.W. did... admittedly, there are one or two poems like *When I was one-and-twenty* which are in the folksong manner and for which something of the same nature should be or could be suggested in the music, just as *Farewell to barn and stack and tree* harks back to the old Scottish ballad style. But for the rest, I see no reason to try this sort of thing at all; for instance the settings of *Sleep* by Gurney and Warlock are both equally beautiful, but there is no suggestion of going back to the Elizabethans in either. It is for this reason that I am a complete heretic about both Butterworth's and V.W.'s settings; the former I find too much like folksong pastiche and the latter (with the exception of *From far, from eve and morning*) overdone and at times rather hysterical. *Bredon Hill* is too impressionistic, *Is my team ploughing?* too dramatic; and granted that the 3rd and 4th stanzas may be a bit weak from the poetic point of view, I don't think V.W. ought to have omitted them, as that destroys the gradual approach to the more searching questions that start at the 5th verse..."

C.W.O. may have caught the odd modal ring or folksong-like cadence in his settings, but he himself defined his pedigree as follows:

1) German lieder, particularly those of Hugo Wolf (he was a founder-member of the Hugo Wolf Society) ; 2) the singing of Elena Gerhardt; 3) Delius's music; 4) Housman's poetry; 5) the critical writings of Ernest Newman. Delius was only one of a long list of distinguished admirers which included Warlock, Bax, Eugene Goossens, Neville Cardus, Casals, Gerald Abraham, Felix Aprahamian, Walter Legge and Eric Sams. Unfortunately composers' reputations are built not only on the quality of their productions but also on the quantity: a composer has to keep his name before the public, and if he lives in the country and writes exclusively art-songs he cannot but lose touch with a wider audience. C.W.O. retired to the country in 1930 for health reasons, and composed very sparingly; much of the rest of his time was devoted to literary pursuits—e.g. minutiae of Housman scholarship and the preparing of English translations for singing of the texts of 51 Wolf songs, together with a preface, *The Problem of Translation* which bears eloquent testimony to Orr's love of Rossetti's translations from the Italian. That these excellent translations of Orr's have remained unpublished does a great disservice to the cause of lieder in English. However the result of this pattern of life was that C.W.O.'s own music remained shrouded in relative obscurity; unhappily he was not the kind of composer (like Herbert Howells, for instance) who remains essentially indifferent to performance and critical heed; he needed appreciation to stoke up the fires of his creativity. Deprived of fuel they died slowly down and finally went out altogether. Quote as he might from his beloved Housman:

'Tis sure far finer fellows

Have fared much worse before

he could not hide the disappointment and sense of failure which clouded his last years as a consequence of this chronic lack of recognition. He was, however, the very opposite of a rancorous or self-centred man.

One never felt depressed in his company for one minute, for he had a keen sense of fun and a touching, almost child-like gratitude to anyone who showed the slightest interest in his work. In person and manner he was as unlike his great idol Housman as can be imagined: immensely warm-hearted, open, sympathetic, self-effacing to a fault, and a musician to the fingertips as anyone can hear who plays the private recordings of his songs in which the composer plays the piano accompaniments. He was a compendium of all those positive qualities which one seeks in one's elders but rarely finds all gathered together. I find I have absorbed many of his habits, for instance his love of 'grangerising' books, of compiling scrapbooks, of collecting articles, photographs and memorabilia of writers or composers he admired. I shall miss our walks through Painswick and up to the Beacon with his reminiscing of Housman and Delius as we scanned the 'blue remembered hills'; the sound of his piano early of a summer morning as he mused over some delectable fragment of Delius or Warlock; most of all perhaps his chatty, friendly letters, so full of selfless interest and praise for my own achievements, such as they were. I wish I could have done more on his behalf, for C.W.O. was an important part of my own spiritual coming-of-age, and I shall always look back on our friendship in gratitude and with pride. Nor do I have to look far for a suitable epitaph. I open his copy of *A Shropshire Lad*, turn to the last page and copy out in toto the last poem. To me it speaks for the enduring worth of C. W. Orr's music.

I hoed and trenched and weeded,
 And took the flowers to fair:
 I brought them home unheeded;
 The hue was not the wear.

So up and down I sow them
 For lads like me to find
 When I shall lie below them,
 A dead man out of mind.

Some seed the birds devour
 And some the season mars
 But here and there will flower
 The solitary stars,

And fields will yearly bear them
 As light-leaved spring comes on,
 And luckless lads will wear them
 When I am dead and gone.



Bernard Herrmann

a personal memoir by David Simmons

Only Bernard Herrmann could have decided to die on Christmas Eve, only months after he had finished conducting *Taxi Driver*, his last (and greatest) film score in 1976; and only the same Bernard Herrmann would have managed to amass the most credible and creditable record among musicians born in America this century for a lifetime's devotion to British music. Delius, Elgar were his favourites, and these were closely followed in his esteem by Vaughan Williams, Grainger, Finzi, Bax and Rubbra in his private pantheon.

One can easily observe the abiding inspiration Delius provided for this apparently grizzled and supposedly rude character—to outsiders he often suggested a character from *Citizen Kane* (his first film score, written when he was barely in his twenties for his friend and contemporary, Orson Welles). But then, one should also remember that one development of his association with Welles came when they played their respective roles as central character and composer for the Robert Stevenson film of *Jane Eyre*. The music for this film provided a basis for what 'Bennie' regarded as his masterpiece, *Wuthering Heights*. He recorded this opera in London with British artists and orchestra, and it is still available with his other concert compositions on the Unicorn label. I attended the sessions for these, and remember one of the orchestra, the double bass player, Eugene Cruft, whom we now must also mourn, asking the sweating composer-conductor during a break: "Bennie, I'm glad to play in this, etc., but why did you choose this Brontë subject for your opera?"

The reply was significant, "Yer see, Gene, Delius was going to do it an' got too damm busy, so I thought I'd do it for him."

In fact, these sessions followed his long association with Hitchcock, culminating in the widely admired *Psycho*—which Herrmann scored for a small string band, a fact that gives the lie to those who think all Hollywood composers liked massive effects all the time.

If, then, Herrmann's films could embrace horror and suspense, the American tragedy, world-renowned British literature among their subject matter, they could also embrace such different fields as the protest and compassion in *Fahrenheit 451* or fantasy such as the 'actor' version of *Gulliver's Travels*.

But back to his opera. I remember saying I felt it was more of a film of the forties-fifties epoch, and would inevitably invite the sort of comment that we have recently seen accorded once again to Walton's *Troilus*. He parried the remark by borrowing my private tapes of *Fennimore* and desperately sought to interest the gramophone moguls powerful at the time. Now, of course, in his true humility he would

have sought out the newly-available Meredith Davies recording, and would, like all of us, have been grateful that at last some interest was being shown.

But Bennie would return to his opera, and as he stalked and stimulated his companions with his alternating sensitivity and irascibility, one thought that this self-evident realisation of the Heathcliffe legend was not, as they say in *Private Eye*, a million miles away from that other neo-Nietzschean Yorshireman, who like Bennie, was a Self-ordinating exile, of transplanted roots.

If Delius was born in Bradford of German parents, Herrmann was born in New York in 1911 of Russian-Jewish origin; both managed to draw their self-expressive musical needs from apparently vexatious personalities to outsiders, and complete dedication to the tasks music imposed upon them.

Bennie had no illusions about either Hollywood or show biz, yet the scores he provided for the studios—to which he would return from his self-imposed Grez, in his case near Regents Park—revealed a composer whose personality and originality could share the fame of great European names such as Waxman, Rosza, Steiner and, of course, the unforgettable Korngold. But Bernard Herrmann's gift, like Ives', was specifically American in its innocent use of all the languages at his behest, since every film score he wrote was both recognisably himself and universally American. The fluidity of utterance from *Kane* to *Taxi Driver*, within this restrictive medium, is unforgettable, and comparable to the same limpid strength and continuity in Delius.

Bennie never forgot that the American composer, like his British counterpart, needed championship and an audience, and throughout his long career in the forties as house conductor for the Columbia Broadcasting System, he built a record of performance of unfamiliar music, principally British music of this century, which is acknowledged by our President in his foreword to the reprint of his famous book.

We must remember that Herrmann's network had a rival, NBC, and that they could offer in their Studio 8H incandescent performances of a great restricted repertoire which ranged from Beethoven to Brahms and through Verdi and Wagner, with frankly little regard for those not ascribed to the Olympian Establishment.

But lucky CBS, they weren't being opportunistic when they appointed the tyro Herrmann. His typical programmes could consist of a movement from his great friend Ives, the *duet* Tchaikovsky wrote which uses material from *Romeo and Juliet*, and the evening show would be completed by *Brigg Fair* and the *Enigma*. Another typical offering would embrace an overture by Goetz or Goldmark, a concerto by Scott or Finzi, the *Siegfried Idyll* and *Brigg Fair*. He had the luck to broadcast

concertos with Landowska and Rachmaninov, and equated them in his professional esteem with Grainger.

In fact he told me once with a grin worthy of Beecham that the only composers that ever lived with any originality were Grainger, Bach and Duke Ellington—and after I had looked disturbed he said: “Well Delius, I suppose, and Elgar...”

A tireless champion then of what some may still regard as the essential stuff of music for the listener. As man and musician he was the best definition I knew of that unfortunate four letter word ‘good’, and I’m not surprised that he was a friend of Ralph and Ursula Vaughan Williams, Leopold Stokowski, Igor Stravinsky — and his ‘serious’ scores were introduced by Barbirolli and Beecham.

We all share Bennie stories and my favourite has had wide currency. When in California he would sometimes leave the house and shop for his wife, likewise his affable neighbour, the composer of the *Firebird* and the *Canticum Sacrum*. The conversation was always the same:

BH: ‘Greetings, maestro, busy?’

IS: Of course, you know, this... and that...’

BH: ‘How many bars of music did you manage today?’

IS: No, no my boy, you tell me.’

These last two questions would then be repeated, Stravinsky would get gruffer and Herrmann would become remarkably chastened—for Bennie. Eventually, out of sheer respect, BH would concede:

‘Well maestro, I guess I managed about 40 to 50. Say around forty-five.’

‘Really my boy?’ came the reply. ‘I only managed one, but it was good, bloody good.’

But since Hollywood never quite got the fees right, Stravinsky never worked for his mogul neighbours. Bennie did, maintaining stoutly that writing music for films need not preclude quality.

Indeed the credit title, *Music by Bernard Herrmann*, always promised and achieved real professional craftsmanship and purpose, and to-day, many authorities on film music such as Henry Pleasants and Christopher Palmer are acknowledging his pre-eminence in this field; and thanks now to the domestic screen, one can catch up with a Herrmann film, directed by Welles, Hitchcock or Truffaut, recalling but three collaborators.

His ‘serious’ music, which as we have already hinted is redolent mostly of what we may call ‘Englishness’, still needs more live performances to complement the various items on Decca and the invaluable Unicorn series. Every Delian would find Herrmann’s immediate sympathies with our guru of Grez in *Wuthering Heights*, a strong, meaty, yet deeply romantic work. An affinity with Warlock, with a special feel for fine English poetry is apparent in the *Fantasticks*, and his love of

Elgar is apparent in *For the Fallen*—a self-explanatory piece. Each item I have listed is assuredly characterful, however, just as his wonderful music for our greatest 20th century art-form, the cinema, remains unforgettable. So indeed, was the man. RIP.

News from the USA

DELIUS SOCIETY BRANCH FORMED IN PHILADELPHIA

Most important news from the USA is that a branch of the Delius Society has at last been set up in Philadelphia. Starting-point for this momentous move was a meeting held on 11th December 1976 at Davyd Booth's home, when the following temporary officers were elected:

Chairman: William W. Marsh Jr.

Vice-Chairman: Davyd Booth

Secretary: Roy A. Weldon

Treasurer: David J. Duke Jr.

Other Directors: Norman Gentieu and Peggy Neely

This inaugural meeting was followed by a Delius Birthday Party on 29th January 1977 at the same venue. Davyd Booth played the 3rd Violin Sonata accompanied by Maxine Hance, who also played the *Three Piano Preludes*. An excerpt was read from May Harrison's article in the 1937 Royal College of Music Magazine, a talk by Eric Fenby on a Unicorn record was played, and champagne and cheese were served. Fifteen members or potential members attended, which was considered good as it was an evening of high winds and near-zero temperatures.

The next event was an open rehearsal of the Orchestral Society of Philadelphia at which William Smith conducted a play-through of *Paris*, using a photocopy of Beecham's score, given to him some years ago when the conductor was visiting Philadelphia. The Orchestral Society numbers some 95 players, with professional principals. The conductor drew comparisons with the music of Strauss, but declared that he learned more about Paris from this score than he did about the hero from that of *Ein Heldenleben*! More than a dozen Delius Society members attended with guests.

The fourth meeting of the Philadelphia Branch was on 11th March when David Stone, the British violinist, played the two violin sonatas he has recorded on the Pearl label, Nos. '0' and 1. The programme also

included Vaughan Williams' song-cycle *On Wenlock Edge* and Warlock's *The Curlew*. Tenor soloist was Gregory Weist of the Curtis Opera Department, and David Stone was accompanied by Vladimir Sokoloff of the Curtis Institute Faculty and also a Delius Society member. (It was through Dr. Sokoloff's influence that the concert was able to take place at the Institute, a privilege normally reserved for its own concerts.) Instrumentalists were Luis Biava and Davyd Booth (violins), Charles Griffin (viola), George Harpham ('cello), Louis Rosenblatt (cor anglais) and Deborah Carter (flute). Davyd Booth, Charles Griffin and Deborah Carter are all Delius Society members, and all are members of the Philadelphia Orchestra except the flautist, who is the wife of William Smith, its Associate Conductor. Two nights previously David Stone gave a lecture on the music of Delius at the Philadelphia Art Alliance.

The final meeting of the season will be a dinner on 24th April, at which it is hoped to show the Ken Russell film.

* * *

The recent efforts of William Marsh Jr. and other Philadelphia members have resulted in at least seven new members for the Delius Society. Most important of these is William Smith, who was recently named Associate Conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra in recognition of his twenty-five years' service as assistant conductor to Eugene Ormandy. Besides standing-by for every concert the orchestra gives, and playing in the keyboard section, he also conducts all student and children's concerts, and directs several other groups. Mr. Smith, who is 52, has as his main hobby a deep interest in Sherlock Holmes, and he has graduated to being a Master of the Sons of Copper Beeches. He owns a first edition, a deerstalker hat and a Gazogene, and has visited most of the places associated with Holmes, including those in London.

William Smith is married to Deborah Carter, who graduated from the Curtis Institute in 1969 and has appeared as solo flautist with the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh orchestras and is now on the faculty of several music schools. She also has joined the Delius Society, and we extend a warm welcome to both her and her husband.

* * *

The Cleveland paper *The Plain Dealer* reported on 9th January that the Cleveland orchestra will perform *A Mass of Life* under Robert Page in November of this year. Page is Dean of the Carnegie-Mellon School of Music in Pittsburgh. The reporter, Robert Finn, an avid Delian although not a member of the Delius Society, described the *Mass* as "a seldom-heard major score of absolutely stunning impact".

* * *

Radio Station WFLN (Philadelphia) broadcast a programme on 13th October 1976 to commemorate the opening of the 1929 Delius Festival in London. Between 12.05 and 2.00 am they broadcast the Beecham recordings of *Dance Rhapsody No. 2* and *Appalachia*. Meanwhile New York station WNCN put out a Delius birthday concert on 29th January consisting of *A Song before Sunrise* (conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent), Martin Jones playing the *Three Preludes for Piano*, and Sir Charles Groves' recordings of *Dance Rhapsody No. 1* and *Sea Drift*. The last-named was played again in the following programme of masterworks, along with compositions by Ireland, Holst and Rubbra.

Delius Society Meeting

MRS. DAWN REDWOOD ON "DELIUS AND FLECKER"
AT HOLBORN, JANUARY 28th 1977

"What shall we tell you? Tales, marvellous tales
Of ships and stars and isles where good men rest,
Where nevermore the rose of sunset pales,
And winds and shadows fall towards the west".

Thus wrote James Elroy Flecker in 1913. Now, in 1977 we have been offered a chance to renew acquaintance with the poet, and examine the relationship of Delius's music to Flecker's words. In an evening of scholarship and wisdom Dawn Redwood left no one in doubt that Delius and Flecker had much in common, and that Delius had found a worthy partner to Whitman and Dowson.

Mrs. Redwood opened her talk by playing part of *The Walk to the Paradise Garden* and explained that it was hearing this at one of the 1920 performances of *A Village Romeo and Juliet* that convinced Basil Dean that he had found the ideal composer for the incidental music to *Hassan*. Previously he had contacted, and had been refused by, Maurice Ravel, as noted in Mrs. Redwood's articles in the Delius Society Journal (numbers 50 and 51), but further research had enabled her to recount a fascinating chronology in which no less than nine composers were considered at various times.

The speaker then turned to Flecker and his writings. A brief biographical note was followed by a discussion of his poetry with particular emphasis on the germs of ideas which eventually became of great significance in *Hassan*. The alterations to the plot were also traced and we saw how the original comedy, based on an episode from the *Arabian Nights*, was gradually pushed into the background, as a sub-plot, first suggested by a story written by Flecker's wife, took greater prominence. This increased the importance of the element of cruelty, apparently a significant feature of Flecker's make-up. Other symbolic elements, such as the carpet and the fountain, were examined critically and compared most interestingly with important themes running through the plots of

several Delius operas. (One of the many admirable aspects of the evening was a display in the foyer of material relating to *Hassan*, which included a number of German press reviews. One of these spoke of the operatic features of the play, while another described the story as "much less of a poetic drama than an opera-text").

As Dawn's talk unfolded it soon became apparent that the juxtaposition of Delius and Flecker was important. Flecker, who revelled in the French "Parnassian" theory of poetry, had attempted to rid his work of the sentimentality and extravagance of the 19th century Romantics. He wrote with the expressed intention of creating beauty. The Parnassians had attempted to raise the technique of their art to a height which would enable them to express the subtlest ideas in powerful and simple verse. Theirs was a clear theory of art for art's sake. Flecker wrote, "It is not the poet's business to save man's soul but to make it worth saving. It is to make beautiful the tragedy and tragic the beauty of man's life". Delius's philosophy was just that.

After the interval Mrs. Redwood made interesting comparisons between the lives and personalities of Flecker and Delius. The first performance of *Hassan*, which took place in Darmstadt and not London, used a different text to the one we know, and was by all accounts less satisfactory. Letters from Hellé Flecker and from Basil Dean afforded revealing insights into details of it and of the way in which the music was handled. Dean's criticisms led, of course, to his requesting more music "from a loudly protesting composer", and at the end of the programme we were delighted to be able to listen to a tape-recording, made available by courtesy of the BBC, of these extra pages as played as an appendix to the radio broadcast of December 1973. We also listened to the very first recording of the music to the play, made in 1923 by His Majesty's Theatre Orchestra and Chorus under Percy Fletcher.

The Society was honoured on this occasion by the presence of Mr. John Sherwood, biographer of James Elroy Flecker, and Mrs. Sherwood, and also of Mr. Raymond Raikes, producer of the broadcast already referred to. It was generally felt to be one of the most interesting talks the Society had heard for a long time. Mrs. Redwood is to be congratulated for the research she has undertaken, much of which I understand involved tracing important letters which are not in the possession of the Delius Trust Archives. It is very good news to hear that Dawn is preparing to publish her material in the form of a monograph. Further details will be announced in a future issue of this journal.

Michael Salmon.



Correspondence

A CRITICAL STUDY OF DELIUS AND HIS MUSIC

Sir,

Mr. R. O. Wright's quest in the January issue of the Delius Society Journal for 'an erudite musicologist who could write a definitive critical study of Delius and his music' will, I trust, be fulfilled in the study I have pondered for some years, commissioned by Oxford University Press.

He will find for the first time detailed practical revelations of how Delius himself wished his music to be performed, particularly in specific instances, together with a frank appraisal of the musical invention of every known work that Delius has written.

I hope my study will be published in 1978 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of my initiation as his amanuensis.

Yours faithfully,

Eric Fenby

London. N.6.

RECORDINGS BY CHARLES KENNEDY SCOTT

Dear Sir,

It has long been thought that Charles Kennedy Scott never committed any Delius recordings to commercial disc but this is happily not the case. With the Oriana Madrigal Choir Scott did record *The Splendour Falls on Castle Walls* for HMV on November 16th, 1926 in the Small Queen's Hall, London. For reasons not given on the recording sheet the disc, which has Cc9444 as its matrix number, remains unpublished.

Yours faithfully,

Malcolm Walker

Harrow, Middlesex

DELIUS SONGS

Dear Sir,

I read with interest Mr. G. Manchester's letter in Journal No. 53, but I regret to suggest that his hopes for the Delius songs to be recorded are unlikely to be realised. In the centenary year of our composer the BBC broadcast recitals by Wilfred Brown, Max Worthley, Heather Begg and others of *some* of the songs. (No Verlaine, no Nietzsche, etc.) Since 1963 I have written possibly a dozen times, asking for repeats of these recitals inter alia. My letters have been acknowledged, other queries answered, some requests granted, but no mention whatsoever of the Delius songs. I have received similar treatment of several requests to hear again that fascinating Peter Warlock series of some 8-10 years ago.

The quality of the few lieder programmes we do have is sufficient indication that there is very little interest at the BBC in solo song. If one-tenth of the time given to the Bach Cantatas were available for

our composer, we could have all his output of songs probably annually.
Yours faithfully,

Harry C. Davies

Dawlish, Devon.

* It was reliably reported more than a year ago that John Shirley-Quirk was interested in making a recording of Delius songs. Such a project would fulfil a much-wanted need, judging from correspondence received on the subject, but no more has been heard since—Editor.

Forthcoming Events

27th April at 7.30 p.m.

American Festival Overture—William Schuman.

Violin concerto—Delius.

Symphony No. 9 in C major—Schubert.

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra conducted by John Canarina, with Ralph Holmes (violin). The Guildhall, Plymouth.

28th April at 7.45 p.m.

Programme as 27th April, in the Winter Gardens, Bournemouth.

30th April at 7.30 p.m.

Programme as 27th April, in the Queen's Hall, Barnstaple.

26th May at 8.15 p.m.

Eric Fenby speaks on Delius at Limpsfield. Members will meet in *Hoskins Hotel* (near Oxted station) from 7 p.m. onwards.

28th May.

Delius Society AGM (3.30 p.m.) and Dinner (8 p.m.) at The Pavours Arms, Page Street, S.W.1.

13th June at 7.30 p.m. (please note change of date)

Elgar Society meeting at the British Institute of Recorded Sound, 29 Exhibition Road, London SW7. Eric Fenby talks on "Delius and Elgar".

3rd July at 7.30 p.m.

"Brigg Fair" — Delius.

Concerto for 'Cello and Orchestra — Elgar.

"The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" — Wilfred Josephs.

Suite: "The Planets" — Holst.

Zara Nelsova ('Cello) with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Charles Groves.

22nd September at 7.30 p.m.

Delius Society meeting—venue to be announced. Eric Fenby talks about the 'Cello and Double Concertos.

24th November at 7.30 p.m.

Delius Society meeting—venue to be announced. Christopher Redwood presents a centenary tribute to Roger Quilter.

